THE FORGE IN THE FOREST

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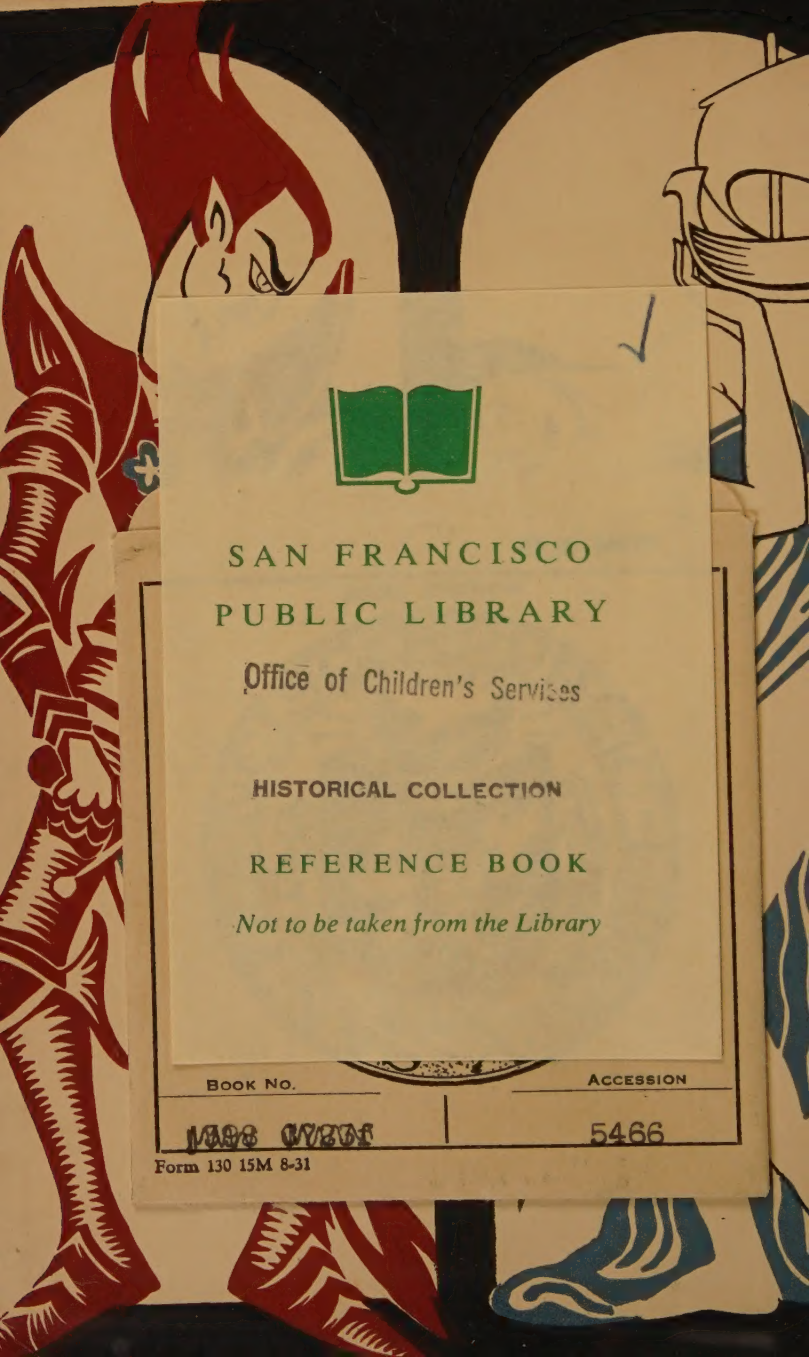
COLUM



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THE FORGE IN THE FOREST

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THE FORGE IN THE FOREST

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I KNOW A SHOE-
MAKER WHO
MAKES SHOES
WITHOUT LEATHER
OUT OF THE FOUR ELE-
MENTS, FIRE, WATER,
EARTH AND AIR AND
EVERY CUSTOMER
GETS TWO PAIR

THE FORGE IN THE FOREST

BY

PADRAIC COLUM

WITH PICTURES BY

BORIS ARTZYBASHEFF

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TO

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SWANZY MORGAN

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THE FORGE IN THE FOREST

AVING caught the wild horse that for some reason was called the King's Horse, and having tamed it, the next thing to do was to have shoes of iron put upon its hoofs. So they brought the horse to the Forge in the Forest. Strokes of iron upon iron sounded within the forge.

Two went within and two stayed outside with the horse. The two who went within the forge saw a man with brawny arms and a curling beard hammering an iron upon the anvil. They had been told that the smith was shaggy and dwarfed, but this man was very upright.

"Smith, smith!" they cried.

The man went on shaping the iron, not looking towards them. "Smith, smith!" they cried again.

Still he did not look towards them. They saw that what he was shaping upon the anvil was the hilt of a sword. And as they watched him they knew that this was not the Blacksmith of the Forest, but the King who had come into the forge to make a sword fit for his own hand.

"Who be ye?" he said, as he took what he had shaped and plunged it into a cauldron of ice-cold water.

"Lord," said the two who had come into the forge, "we are four men, brothers, who have brought a horse here to have shoes of iron put upon it. It happens that although we are brothers we have each come from a different part of the world. And we are story-tellers," they said.

The King who had turned blacksmith looked at the horse that was held outside. As he looked at it he put his hand upon an arm on which there was a scar to be seen.

"Has the horse ever had shoes of iron upon its hoofs?" he asked.

"No, lord," the two brothers said, "this has been

a wild horse. For a long time we tried to capture it, and at last we have succeeded. We have tamed it, too. We have to hurry away now, and we thought that we could find in the Forge in the Forest a smith who would put shoes of iron upon the horse."

"You have found one who should be specially willing to put shoes of iron upon this horse."

"Not you, lord?" the two brothers said.

The King looked again upon the horse that was held by the two brothers who were outside the forge. He looked at the two who were within the forge, and he said:

"You are story-tellers, you say. What stories can you tell?"

"Lord," the two said, "we four can tell stories for every stroke that a smith strikes shaping two pairs of shoes for a horse."

"If you are better skilled in your craft than that, I will make shoes for the horse you have caught."

"In what way better skilled, lord?" the two said.

"The blacksmith makes shoes out of the four

elements — Fire, Water, Earth, and Air. If you can tell a story that goes with each of the elements——"

"Lord, we can tell two."

"That would be skill indeed. If you can tell two stories that go with each of the elements, I myself will make the shoes for your horse."

But now the two men were doubtful. "Lord," they said, "one of us has no knowledge of what stories the other has. It may be that we spoke hurriedly, and that we cannot tell two stories that go with the Fire, the Water, the Earth, and the Air." Then the two men who were in the forge spoke doubtfully to each other; they went without and they came back with the two others, and the great white horse.

Then the King whose pleasure it was to work in the forge, making for himself swords that fitted his own hand, took out of the ice-cold water the blade he had shaped. It was taken away to have the first edge put upon it. Then the King took iron to shape into a horseshoe. The apprentice-

The four brothers brought the great white horse to the Forge in the Forest

smith blew with the bellows; the fire mounted up.

"The first element," said the King.

He put the iron into the fire. One of the four brothers stepped forward. "I pray that it is not my story you are going to tell," the second brother said to him. "Brother, I know not what your story is," he said. And saying that, he looked towards where the King was watching the fire, and he began:

PHAETHON

IS fiery steeds and his gleaming chariot the Sun-God, Helios, gave over to the young man Phaethon. The shining doors were rolled open and the steeds stood there, pawing the ground and sniffing the wind that blew towards them; yoked to the steeds was the gleaming chariot.

These were the horses and this was the chariot that, journeying through the heavens, brought light and warmth to men. None but Helios himself had ever driven them before. Now Helios stood there and the light was gone from his face. "O Phaethon, O my son," he cried, "thou art being given what thou hast claimed. But before thou dost take the reins, stay and consider! Thou art half mortal, and only the immortals may drive

these fiery steeds and this gleaming chariot through the course of the heavens."

But the young man, Phaethon, sprang into the chariot and took in his hands the reins that were across the necks of the fiery steeds. "Long did I live on earth," he said, "without name and without honour; now I would have the world know that I am indeed the son of bright Helios. Thou didst swear to let me have a token that I, Phaethon, am indeed thy son, and this is the token that I claim—to be let drive thy steeds and thy chariot through the course of the heavens for a single day."

"Renounce thy desire before it is too late, and stay in my shining halls, known to mortals and immortals as my son, the son of Helios who brings light and warmth to the world."

But already the young man had shaken the reins; the fiery steeds sprang forward, and the shining doors of their stable rolled back. Something more his father said to him, but Phaethon did not hear his words. The bright wheels spun

round and the chariot of Helios took its course through the sky.

The brightness of their tossing manes made Phaethon exultant; the swiftness of the steeds as they swept along the brightening path through the heavens filled him with delight, and his heart was lifted with pride as he held the reins that guided the course of the horses. "I—I," he cried in his pride, "I, the nameless son of Klymene, my mother, have the horses of Helios under my hands; I drive my father's gleaming chariot through the heavens; I, Phaethon, will be remembered, and all men must speak of me, because for a single day I am bringing them light and warmth."

He thought of the time he had bade farewell to Klymene, his mother; he thought of how he had come into the bright halls of Helios; he thought of how he had heard his father speak of him, praising his beauty, and of how pride had grown in him then and a resolve to have his father grant him a token that would make the world know that he, Phaethon, was indeed the son of

Helios. His father had sworn that he would grant him any token that he might ask.

"And what other token might I ask than this?—to have their reins in my hands and these fiery steeds sweeping forward upon the brightening path. O brightness of fire! What was it that my father said about none but an immortal being able to drive the steeds of Helios? I drive them. I am half mortal, but now that I have driven the fiery steeds and the gleaming chariot I feel that I am become immortal! Immortal, immortal, immortal!" he cried, as he went through the brightening heavens, "immortal Phaethon!"

But the immortal horses knew that hands that were not immortal held their reins. They knew that the weakness of one who dies was in the hold that was upon them. They swerved aside from their path in the heavens. They plunged and plunged, going farther off their course. And upon earth men looked up and said, "A portent in the heavens! The steeds of Helios are rushing here and there!"

Plunging and plunging, the horses went farther and farther off their course

To Phaethon the horses were but tossing their manes; the bright wheels were but spinning as they should spin. He stood upright in the chariot, holding the reins, and he spoke:

"Are these the hands of one who is half immortal? These hands that hold and guide the horses of Helios! But must men speak always of the horses of Helios? Would that there was a way of making men below wonder at their course today! Wonder, and then know that not Helios but another, one younger and more daring than he, has hands upon the reins today!"

Plunging and plunging, the horses went farther and farther off their course. They went too far from their course in the blue heavens. Earth withered as they came too near. Fire sprang up, fire, and again, fire! The trees on the plains crackled, and dropped branches, and burned. On the mountains the forests took fire. Now there were mountains burning with fires that went up to the sky.

He knew now that the steeds had gone from

their course. He tried to guide them back. The fiery steeds turned savage eyes and bared teeth upon him. They tossed their heads; the wheels spun faster and faster, and the chariot rocked as they rushed and plunged along.

Fires went up in the cities of men; in the rivers and lakes the waters dried up; men lay dying upon the earth. The young man Phaethon, knowing his hands too weak to guide them, shouted to the fiery steeds.

Zeus, the ever-watchful, saw Phaethon's course through the heavens, saw the plunging steeds and the fires going up on the earth, and he knew that all life might be destroyed by the horses and chariot coming nearer and nearer to the earth. He gathered the clouds together, making a veil between the chariot and the world of men. And then he flung his lightning on young Phaethon. The lightning of Zeus tore him from the chariot, and the horses, now that they no longer felt his hands upon the reins, staggered back to their course. Feebly now they went on. Feebly they

finished their journey, but they won back to the shining stables that had been built for them by Hephaestos beside the gleaming halls of Helios.

Down, down into the seething sea young Phaethon fell. But he was not lost in the sea. The daughters of Hesperus found him and lifted his body out of the depths of the sea. They made a tomb for him on the sea-shore, and they wrote above his tomb, "Young Phaethon fell from his father's chariot, but even so he lost nothing of his glory, for his heart was set upon the doing of great things."

No sooner had he finished than the second story-teller was ready to begin. The King, the hammer in his hand, stood by the anvil; he watched the fire that was now deep in the coals, burning around the iron that had been put into it. Before the apprentice-smith blew with the bellows, and before the fire had mounted up, the second story-teller told:

OLD KING FORK-BEARD AND THE SCARF THAT HE GAVE

ITH his kettle of fire burning above him, old King Fork-Beard stays under a hill in our land. Sometimes the fire in his kettle burns very low, and then the people say, "King Fork-Beard is sleeping." Sometimes the fire in his kettle lights up the sky, and then they say, "We had better look out, for now King Fork-Beard is dreaming that he will come down and wet his horse's hoofs in the sea."

Old King Fork-Beard was always dreaming that he would wet his horse's hoofs in the sea. His red horse stayed beside him where he stayed, under the kettle of fire, and fed upon black oats. Then a day would come when King Fork-Beard would stand straight up. He would tip over the kettle

and spill the fire down the hill. He would mount his red horse and go galloping down towards the sea.

And our own horses, as King Fork-Beard upon his red horse came along, would break out of their stables. The goats would have gone first, and the horses would follow where the goats led. The cattle would go plunging about. The sheep would run up a hillside. The cocks would crow, seeing the redness from the kettle of fire. The hens and chickens would go flying from bush to bush, thinking that each bush would be the last they would have to fly to. The ducks would be the most quiet of all; they would find a stream and go swimming in it. The geese would remember they had wings; they would spread them out, and some of them would go flying towards the moon.

And so old King Fork-Beard upon his red horse would go through the land. On and on he would go, so that his horse might wet its hoofs in the sea. And many a good corn-field and many a good grazing field he would spoil for us as he went

upon his way. But after a while he would be back under his hill, sleeping, with his knees drawn up to his beard, and his horse beside him feeding upon black oats, and the kettle of fire burning above him.

And as he stays there with his kettle of fire burning low there are some in our land who say a good word for King Fork-Beard. Indeed there are some who mention his name with the names of the heroes who have saved the land. And they who mention his name in this way tell this story about the gift that King Fork-Beard gave.

They tell of a maiden to whom he gave a scarf, and this scarf was such that wherever it was spread fire came. The maiden to whom it was given was named Ortrud. And when her father died Ortrud was made ruler of our land.

A lord who came from across the sea married Ortrud, the ruler of our land. He married her vowing that he would bring no soldiers from across the sea into our country and have no arms that the Council of our people did not know of.

So Ortrud ruled our land, and the lord whom she had married was by her side. And in those days King Fork-Beard slept, and the fire from his kettle was hardly to be seen.

Ortrud was happy with her lord, and the people who thought that all oaths were being kept were happy with their ruler. All was well and very well, with the land, and the soldiers that we had were hardly in the hundreds.

It happened that Ortrud was one day spinning in a high room in the great house of the rulers of the land. Her maidens were around her, spinning, and singing a song that had in it words about the sleep of King Fork-Beard. The spindle that Ortrud had fell from her hand. It rolled away and it fell down through a crack that was in the floor.

She went and she looked down through the crack that the spindle had fallen through. And she saw men in the wide chamber below, men standing silently in the half-darkness, with arms in their hands. Then Ortrud knew that the oaths that

her husband had sworn had been broken, and that he had brought into the country armed men who could overthrow it and enslave it. She did not cry out as she looked down and saw the soldiers standing stiffly there, under the roof of the rulers of the land.

She rose up, and she left her maidens, and she went to where her husband was pacing up and down in his chamber. She looked straight into his eyes, but he did not look straight into hers. He did not speak to her; she did not speak to him. She went back to where her maidens were, and she whispered to them, and they rose up and went out of the high room, and left the great house, and all those whom they found and spoke to left the great house also.

Then Ortrud went into her own chamber where many sacred things were, and she took the scarf that King Fork-Beard had given her. She left it down on the floor of the great house, and she went outside and joined her maidens and those who had gone out of the house. Her maidens had

brought their spindles, and she sat amongst them and had them go on with their spinning.

But now fire came upon the great house and the redness of burning. The fire that was from the scarf King Fork-Beard had given broke out from the walls and leaped up to the very roof, and the thousand starlings that had just come to nestle along the eaves flew into a cloud of smoke. Then men came up from beneath the flooring of the great house, cutting their way through the timbers with their axes and great swords, and throwing off their armour that was hot upon them, and throwing down their weapons that were hot within their hands. They came up, crying out in terror, and they fled away. And the husband of Ortrud came out of the great house, and the light of the burning was upon his face, making it seem all crooked. He and the men he had brought into our country fled down to the sea, and they took to their ships, and they sailed away from the land.

And so Ortrud was left alone, and the great house that she had lived in as ruler was left there

standing blackened and broken as a monument to the great deed that was hers when she spread the scarf that was King Fork-Beard's upon the floor of the house and saved the land from the armed men who would have overthrown it.

And so it comes that when our people speak of those who saved the land in the old days they speak of King Fork-Beard who gave the scarf that Ortrud spread upon the floor, bringing the fire that routed those armed men. They speak kindly of King Fork-Beard, although he has just come down from his hill and narrowed the corn-lands and the grazing fields upon us. I have been there when he has gone by upon his red horse. But not always does he have his horse wet its hoofs in the sea. The Woman in the Sky sometimes pours down a flood that makes his horse halt. The people say that she, like Ortrud, lets her spindle fall down. And sometimes when she looks to where it has fallen she sees King Fork-Beard riding along upon his red horse. She halts them then before the horse has wet its hoofs in the sea.

As soon as his brother had said, "Wet its hoofs in the sea," the one who was to tell the story about Water thought that his turn had come; but it was not yet. The King took out of the fire the red iron. He hammered it on the anvil; he shaped it upon the horn of the anvil. Then one of the brothers lifted up the horse's foot, and the King came over and put the iron against the hoof, searing it and measuring the shoe. He went back to the anvil, and he hammered off bits of iron. Again he put it into the fire. Then the brothers, standing by the horse, said to one another: "Soon the horseshoe will be in the cauldron of water, and the one who is ready with the story will then begin." And one of the brothers said, "In the stories that have been told of the Fire, horses have appeared. Whoever tells the stories of the Water should bring horses into them, too. This will make it appear that we are story-tellers indeed." And the brothers said that they would have horses in the stories of the Earth and Air also.

The King fitted again the iron to the horse's hoof. Then he plunged it into the cauldron. The story-teller was ready; he came forward, and he told:

THE STORY OF YS

HEY said of Dahut that her mother was a Woman of the Sea, and that the King, Dahut's father, had taken her from where he had found her seated on the rocks by the sea. They said, too, that the King had shut up this Woman of the Sea in the tower he had builded, and that he had had no pity upon her although she was often heard crying in the tower—crying, the people said, for her home in the sea. The people told all this to explain why Dahut, the daughter of King Gradlon, was different from all other maidens, and why it was that she seemed to hate Ys, her father's city. Dahut's mother had died before Dahut could know her—died in the tower to the top of which she would climb to look out upon the sea.

King Fork-Beard was always dreaming that he would wet his horse's hoofs in the sea

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Where the sea is now there was once a wide plain, and on it the city of Ys was builded—Ys that is now beneath the sea. The sea's level was above the plain on which the city stood, and the sea was held off from the city by a long wall. Always the people of Ys could hear the sea as it beat against the wall. But they were not made fearful by the beating of the waves of the sea: their fathers had fought off the sea, and the wall that was built by them would hold it off always. Sometimes, when it could flood only part of their plain, they would open the great gate that was in the wall and let the sea flow in to lay its weeds and its salt upon their meadows.

The people of the city could look out upon the sea: there was the high tower that had been built by the King beside his palace, and when one mounted upon it one could see whether the sea was high or low, and count the ships that were upon it. The one who went oftenest up into the tower was Dahut, the King's daughter.

As for King Gradlon, he did not know what his

daughter did or how she lived. His beard was long; he read in deep books, and he slept long and deep in the night. And Dahut, his daughter, had golden eyes—golden eyes with no eyebrows above them, and a neck that was white and soft and throbbing, and red lips and little feet. She went softly through the ways of the palace, and she went softly up the stairs of the tower. Her father and the people of the city said, "Dahut is this, and Dahut is that," but none knew what Dahut was except those who saw her feasting on the rare fruits and the strange wines she had brought to her, or who saw her dancing at night.

They were young men whom she danced with. Some of them, after she had danced with them, she would take to the top of the tower, and she would make them promise that they would do some dangerous thing for her. Under the spell of her golden eyes they would make their promise, and afterwards they would go through the city looking like men who had lost their hope. Then they would leave the city, these young men whom

Dahut had danced with, and be seen no more in Ys. It was from what they muttered as they went about the city that the people got the thought that Dahut hated Ys, her father's city. After a while they said no more, "Dahut is this, and Dahut is that." Now they said, "None know Dahut except those who have danced with her in the night. Would that the King would look upon Dahut and judge her and restrain her." But her father, his beard spread out upon his knees, read in his deep book while she feasted, or, with the silver key of the sea-gate around his neck, slept upon his purple bed while she danced in the palace, or climbed the stairway up into the tower.

There came a young man into Ys from a foreign land. Dahut pretended not to look upon him as he spoke to her father. She made a sign with her hand to him, and she brought him to her feast. Galor was this young man's name. They danced together. They feasted, and then boldly they entered the chamber where the King slept upon his purple bed, the silver key of the sea-gate hang-

ing from around his neck. "Take the key," the young man said to Dahut. She took the silver key that was around her father's neck. "Open now the sea-gate that is in the long wall."

To the young men whom she had danced with before Dahut had said, "Open the sea-gate," and they had promised to do so, and then had become fearful and despairing on account of what they had promised to do. But this young man bade her take the key herself and open the gate. "Now let me make him forget what he has asked me to do," she said to herself. They danced, and the servants in the palace who saw them dance cried out, "Dahut is accursed, accursed," and they crowded around where the King slept upon his purple bed, and they wakened him up. Down the stairway came the King, his great beard shaking up and down his chest. Dahut and Galor ran out and away from the palace. The young man lifted her up and carried her through the long meadows and down to the wall that was built against the sea.

"Open, you, the gate," he said, and she put the silver key that had always been hanging from her father's neck into the lock of the high gate. "I wanted another to do this," she said, "I wanted to make a man do a deed that would leave him fearful, and I wanted the sea that my mother cried to go back to, to come in upon the city." She unlocked the gate. They heard the crying of the sea-birds beyond the wall. The sea began to push at the opened gate. Soon the waves pushed the gate wide. A sea-bird flying through the open gate lighted on the grass of the plain of Ys in the first light of the morning. "Beware if ever you go from me now," said Dahut to Galor. "Beware if ever you come to me again," said Galor to Dahut. He flung her against the wall, and he went away.

She went within the palace; she heard the bells of Ys peal in alarm. Her father came to her, carrying under his arm the great book he had been reading. He took her without, and he mounted upon the horse that was the swiftest in his stables.

Dahut mounted behind him. The people cried to their King to gallop swiftly until he came to a place that the sea might not come to, and take possession of that place for the building of a new city. They cried to him while they stayed behind, mounting high upon the rocks.

So Gradlon with Dahut behind him galloped on and on, the sea flowing upon them as they rode. The sea dashed upon the heels of the horse; it flowed before them as they rode, and the horse splashed and plunged in the waves of the sea. And then a voice came to Gradlon telling him that he would have to throw behind him the thing that he held dearest, so that the sea taking it might flow no further. Then Gradlon threw behind him the great book that he carried. Still the sea flowed on, and the horse splashed deeper and plunged deeper in the waves. The voice came again, telling Gradlon that he would have to throw behind him the thing that he held dearest. Then he threw from the horse his daughter, Princess Dahut. The waves flowed over her, and then the waves ceased

to flow; the sea drew away from that place. And there Gradlon halted and took possession of that place for the new city that his people would build.

They came to him, leaving the high rocks, and soon they began to build the new city. But the sea flows over where the city of Ys was, and now and again the people of the new city hear the bells ring, in lost Ys that is beneath the waves.

A second time the iron was heated and a second time a shoe was put into the cauldron of ice-cold water; as the water hissed around it one of the brothers came forward and told:

KING FERGUS AND THE WATER-HORSE

THE shoes with which a man could walk on the surface of the water and walk in the depths of the water once belonged to the Wee Folk of Faerie, and they were given by them to a King in a certain land. Not gladly did the Wee Folk of Faerie give the shoes that were part of their three treasures—they gave them as ransom for their King, Iubdan, who was being held by this other King.

Now when this other King—Fergus was his name—obtained these shoes he became fonder and fonder of using them. He went upon the rivers of his land, walking upon the surface of their waters, and he went down into the depths of the lakes. And to the lakes that were at the farthest

parts of his kingdom he went more and more. On empty lakes where the boat of a fisherman had never been he would go walking on his fairy shoes. He could follow the wild duck and her brood across the lake, walking on the water. And then he could go down into the depths of the lake and watch all that were there—the great eels moving swiftly through the water and the grey and the speckled fishes moving up and down.

He began to care more for the water with its silence and its strange sights than he did for the upper world with its songs of birds; he was no longer happy when he was sitting upon the judgment seat, or when he was driving in his royal chariot, or when he was hunting upon the plains of his land: his thoughts were always on the silent things that were in the waters of the lakes. Into lakes that were farther away, and into lakes that were deeper and deeper, King Fergus ever went.

There was in his country a lake that no man had ever dived into. This lake was called Loch Rury. King Fergus put on his fairy shoes and

went upon the surface of this lake. He went below the surface and down into the depths, and he walked amongst the kingly crowns and the sword-hilts that had been cast into the lake. He walked amongst them saying to himself that no King in all the world had been able to see what he was seeing. And as he was walking there and thinking these thoughts, Muirdris the Water-Horse appeared before him.

The lips of the Water-Horse were drawn back, and on them there was a grin of such malignancy that the heart of Fergus, the King, was as if it had been squeezed and wrung by strong hands. He dashed up to the top of the water as if through drowning waves. He swam upon the lake, struggling, not using the fairy shoes to walk or to run upon the water. He saw the clear sky again and the birds flying across, and he knew that never again would he go down through the depths of the water nor let himself be looked upon by the fearful things that were there.

And then he heard the scream of Muirdris the

Water-Horse as it came after him through the water. He looked back at the creature, and his face became twisted by the terror that he felt. He threw himself upon the shore, and he lay there until his attendants found him and brought him back to his palace.

The face of Fergus was all twisted and awry. And when they looked upon him in his litter his captains spoke to one another and said, "Our master can no longer be King. No one with a blemish may be King over the men of this land, and this twisted face is a great, great blemish."

So they said as they carried him in in his litter, the King not hearing them, for he was senseless from terror. But at the Council that they held they said, "If we should bring back the one who should succeed this King, there would be war in this land." And then they said, "Let Fergus rule us still, but let it be kept from the people that his face is blemished, and let it be kept from the King, too, that he may not know of his blemish."

The King never went near water thereafter,

and he never saw himself in a stream, or river, or lake. And he never saw himself in any mirror. The Queen had all the mirrors sent out of the palace. And they told the King that a wise woman had told the Queen that she would die upon the day that she saw her face in the mirror with either pallor or a blush upon it.

And those who trimmed the beard or the hair of Fergus did it without having a mirror or any shining thing before them. Before he went into the houses of his nobles, couriers went before him and had the mirrors in the houses and all things with shining surfaces taken away. So by forethought they baffled the malignancy of the Water-Horse.

In his thoughts the King often met the Water-Horse, and in his thoughts he always fled before it. But no one ever said a word to him that might remind him of the lake where he had met the Water-Horse. No one for a long time. And then a bond-maid did it. The King had reproved her for some negligence. She answered him back.

And then he took a switch and struck her for answering him back. "If you had been so brave," she said, "when the Water-Horse faced you, you would not now be keeping from the sight of a twisted face."

And then the King remembered that he had never looked at himself in a mirror since he had come out of the lake where he had met Muirdris the Water-Horse. He called to his attendants and ordered them to bring a mirror to him. They brought one and the King looked into it. He saw a face that was twisted and awry. "The Water-Horse of Loch Rury did this to me," he said. Afterwards he said, "I am not fit to be your King, both because I have a blemish and because I have not avenged myself on the creature that put such a blemish upon me as this twisted face."

He took the fairy shoes that he had left aside for so long, the shoes that the Wee Folk of Faerie had given him as a ransom for their King, and he took his great sword in his hand, and once more he went to Loch Rury, and went down into its depths.

She took the silver key that was around the King's neck

(See page 54)

His people gathered upon the shores of the lake to await what might happen. Their King had promised them that he would win back his own unblemished face.

He went through the depths of the lake. He stood amongst the crowns and the sword-hilts that Kings had cast into it. He heard the scream of Muirdris the Water-Horse. And then it came to him, its teeth bared in a grin of malignancy. The King faced the creature and fought with it, his sword striking at its hard skin and hard sinews while it fought him with teeth and hoofs.

The people gathered upon the shores saw the waters of the lake boil up and redden. Then the head of their King appeared above the waters. His face was no longer twisted; from it had gone the blemish that the terror of the Water-Horse had given it. In his hands he held the head of the Water-Horse. "O my people," he cried out to them, "I, and not Muirdris, have conquered." He looked at them, his face unblemished. "Fergus, Fergus!" they cried to him. The land never knew him again; he sank down into the water.

The King hammered upon it, shaping another shoe for the horse; as he listened to the beat, beat of the hammer, one of the brothers kept thinking of how he could make a poem about the blacksmith if his mind did not have to keep upon the story that soon he would have to tell:

Blacksmith, blacksmith, by the cross!
The great craft is thine!

so the lines of the poem went to the beat, beat of the hammer upon the iron, and he could hardly keep himself from making a poem about the smith.

The walls of the Forge were all blackened with smoke; scraps of iron and broken horseshoes were strewn around where the anvil stood; upon the walls hung great, heavy chains. Where the horse stood was upon a rock that partly made the floor of the Forge in the Forest. The second shoe was put upon it, and the horse stamped with its iron shoes upon the rock.

"I will put special iron in the shoes for the horse's fore-feet," the King said. He brought from without pieces of iron that still had clay upon them, and he set them upon the anvil.

"This is the Element of Earth," he said, "and it claims a story." Then the poem that had been in the mind of one of the brothers went from it. He came over to the anvil, and, laying his hand upon one of the pieces of iron that had lately been taken from the earth, he told:

THE SEVEN SLEEPERS

HE roots of the Cedars of Lebanon grew down into that cavern, and in their tangles a thousand bats huddled together. Every seven years the dog that was Malchus's dog wakened up: raising his head he would see his master and his master's six friends lying, one beside the other, fast asleep.

The dog that was Malchus's dog would smell around, but nothing would come to him except the smell that he had known in burrows—the smell of dry earth. There would be no stir in the air around him; there would be no movement upon the ground; there would be no daylight. The thousand bats, high above him, made no sound and gave no stir. With his head raised, the dog that was Malchus's dog would look at his

master, expecting that his voice would come to him. No voice would come, and the dog would turn round, and lie down, and sleep again.

Every seven years for fifty times seven years the dog would wake up; still his master and his master's six friends lay there, their flesh upon them, and the bloom of youth upon their flesh. Then, one day, light streamed into the cavern, for the stones that had been set at its mouth were removed. The dog waked up; seeing the daylight, the dog barked. Malchus, his master, waked up. And then the other six sleepers awakened.

They awakened and they said to one another, "We have slept; even through the hours of our great danger we slept." They saw daylight streaming in and each said, "It is not as we thought it was." Each thought that he had had a dream of the cavern being closed upon them by their persecutors with immovable stones.

For these youths had been persecuted by Decius, Emperor of the Romans, King of the Four

Quarters of the Earth, having dominion over seventy-two Kings. The Emperor had been moved to persecute the Christians of the city of Ephesus. He had a proclamation made, saying that all who would not go into the pagan temples and make sacrifice to the pagan idols should be cut to pieces by his soldiers; he himself rode on his horse into the city to see that his command was carried out.

Nearly all who were in the city forsook the Christian faith. But there were seven youths who would not forsake it, nor go into the pagan temples and make sacrifice to the pagan idols. These seven were friends who were devoted to one another, and their names were Malchus, Marcian, Dionysius, John, Serapion, Maximian, and Constantine.

They stole from the city and they went towards the mountain Celion, and the dog that was Malchus's dog followed them. They hid within a cavern. Then one went back to the city to buy food. The shopkeeper who sold him meal made a little rent in the bag so that the meal trickled

out, leaving a track where he went. And the Emperor, mounted on his horse, followed this track and came to the cavern where the seven had hidden themselves. He signed to his followers, and they drew heavy stones, and they closed up the entrance of the cavern. "In a while," the Emperor said, "none will be left alive in Ephesus or around it who have the Christian faith." And the Emperor rejoiced as he said this. The seven in the cavern sat together; they saw the daylight being shut out, and they knew from the scornful shouts of those outside that they had been shut in so that they never could leave the cavern. They sat there talking to one another, and weeping and consoling one another. Then they slept. The dog that was Malchus's dog crept close to them, and he, too, slept, but every seven years he awakened.

And after a hundred years, and another hundred, and a third hundred years had passed, a man came to the side of that mountain, and seeking weighty stones for the building of a roadway, he took away the stones that were at the mouth of

the cavern. It was then that the daylight streamed in on where they lay. It was then that the dog that was Malchus's dog barked. It was then that they wakened up—Malchus, Marcian, Dionysius, John, Serapion, Maximian, and Constantine. It was then that each said, "It is not as I thought; the mouth of the cavern is not closed upon us."

They were hungry. Malchus told his friends that he would steal into the city, and buy bread and bring it back to them. They let him go, and he went out of the cavern, and down the side of the mountain, and along the road that went to the city of Ephesus. When he came before the gate of the city he nearly fell backward in astonishment. For behold! over the gate of the city was the cross of the Christian faith. He thought that this could be nothing but a trick to bring back to the city the Christians who had fled from it. And in greater fear than ever he went through the gate and into the city.

He had lived in a wide street in that city, but now he went down by-ways and lane-ways so that

he might not be met by those who knew him. He came to a baker's shop that was away from the main part of the town, and he went within. He saluted the baker, and the baker returned his salutation in the name of Christ. Malchus was fearful, thinking that the words were said to trap him, but he pretended not to have heard what the baker said. He took the loaves from him, and handed him a silver coin in payment.

When the baker received the coin he looked at Malchus sharply. He then went to the back of the shop and spoke to some who were there. Malchus was about to steal out of the shop when the baker came and laid hands on him, saying, "Nay, you must not go until you have told us where the treasure is that you found." "I found no treasure," Malchus said to him. "Where, then, did you get the ancient coin that you have given me in payment for the loaves? Assuredly you have found a treasure." And when the baker said this to him Malchus gave himself up for lost, for he thought that this talk about treasure was but a

pretence to hold him until they examined him on the charge of being a Christian.

The men in the baker's shop laid hold on Malchus, and they put a rope around his neck, and they dragged him into the market-place. They said to those who crowded around, "Here is one who has found a treasure that must be given to the Emperor, and we would have a reward for making him reveal where that treasure now is." And Malchus, in the market-place, looked all round him. He saw no one there whom he knew, and he could see that no one in the crowd knew him. He said to those who were around, "Tell me, I implore you, what city is this that I have come into?" They said, "You are playing the madman, pretending that you do not know that this is the great city of Ephesus."

It was then that Malchus saw coming through the crowd one in the robes of a Christian Bishop. "Who is the youth, and why is he being treated by the Ephesians in this way?" he asked. And Malchus heard those around him say, "He has

offered a coin of the reign of an ancient Emperor in payment for loaves of bread, and he dares to say that it is of the money that his parents gave him. Assuredly he has found a treasure, but he will tell none of the Ephesians where the treasure now is."

Malchus saw that the one who came to him was indeed a Bishop, and he was more and more bewildered. The Bishop came and spoke tenderly to him. Then said Malchus, "I implore you to tell me where the Emperor Decius has gone to." The Bishop said, "Decius is not our Emperor's name. There has not been an Emperor of the name of Decius for three hundred years." And then he said, "If, as you say, you have parents and friends living in the city of Ephesus, tell us their names, so that we may bring them to you."

Then Malchus gave the names of his parents, and the names of the friends he knew in Ephesus. No one in the crowd had heard of them. The Bishop then told him that he might go to the place where he thought his parents lived. Malchus went

there, the Bishop and the people following him. And when he came to the place where his parents' house had stood, behold! what he saw there was a pool of water with birds dipping their wings in it.

When he saw this he wept. Then to the Bishop and those who were with the Bishop he said, "I do not understand what I look upon. I thought that I was in great danger in coming here, thinking that it was only yesterday that the Christians of Ephesus were being put to the sword. But I see the cross surmounting the churches, and I see the Christian Bishop having authority. And yet it is to me as if I had come into a city of the dead. Let me, I pray you, go back to the cavern where I left my companions."

The Bishop signed to those who were guarding him, and they let Malchus go. He went, and they followed him, towards the mountain Celion. He entered the cavern. He saw his six friends, Marcian, Dionysius, John, Serapion, Maximian, and Constantine, and they welcomed him joyfully. He gave them the bread he had brought, and they

ate, and were elated. But when they asked of him what signs he saw of the persecution of Christians in Ephesus, he wept. And then he told them that all they had known in Ephesus had passed away, the good with the evil, and that there was no persecution of Christians there, and that the cross was reared in triumph over the churches and over the gate of the city, and that their parents and all whom they knew were dead and long passed away. His friends listened to him in wonder. And while he was still speaking, the Bishop came into the cavern where they were. "Bless us, Holiness," the seven youths said to him. "Nay, it is you should bless me and bless the people of Ephesus," the Bishop said, "seeing that it was on you that God bestowed the most signal favour—the favour of keeping you in life to witness the triumph of the cross in Ephesus and in the whole of the east of the world." Then the Bishop led them without, and the seven stood on the side of the mountain, and

blessed the people who came that way towards them, on the morning of Easter, carrying the cross.

As they stood there, it seemed to the seven of them—to Malchus, Marcian, Dionysius, John, Serapion, Maximian, and Constantine—that every clod within was making melody, such music came to them from the cavern. Again they went within. Then they lay down as before and the dog that was Malchus's dog lay near them. And lying there their souls went from them, and they passed out of this life. Then the flesh fell away from them, and only their bones and the bones of the dog that was Malchus's dog were left in the cavern. And, behold! a rose tree grew up where they had lain, and its branches spread out and grew over the mouth of the cavern, wreathing it in roses. Ever afterwards, in that cavern and around it, there was the scent of roses.

The seven stood on the side of the mountain and blessed the people

The King did nothing but lay his hand upon the second piece of special iron he had set upon the anvil. Another of the brothers, ready with his story, began:

KING SOLOMON AND THE SERVITOR OF THE LORD OF EARTH

ENAIAH, King Solomon's giant captain, spied within the cave where the Servitor of the Lord of Earth had his lair. He saw him lying with his hair in tangles, and all around him were the bones and teeth of dragons. The Servitor did not see King Solomon's giant captain, and Benaiah, after he had looked upon him, went back to his camp in the high grasses.

He had been commanded by King Solomon to seize Sokar, the Servitor of the Lord of Earth, and to bring him to him—Sokar who had the strength of the storm. For King Solomon would have him bear the stones that were for the building of the Temple. Benaiah had brought chains to lay upon

the Servitor of the Lord of Earth—chains that even he might not break on account of their being inscribed with the magical names that were known to King Solomon. And now Benaiah, the giant captain, had looked upon him, he went back to his camp in the high grasses, and he and his comrades whispered together as to what they might do.

In a day they saw Sokar come forth from that cave that went deep into the earth. He came forth, crouched towards the ground. But, even crouched, Sokar had great bulk, and when he stood up he was immensely tall. Huge and earth-coloured, the Servitor of the Lord of Earth stood there in the sunset, and was beheld of Benaiah and his comrades. He went to a place, and, stooping down, he took water in his joined hands and drank. They saw that Sokar drank out of a cistern that he had made. And having drunk greatly of the snow-water that came down to that cistern, Sokar went back to his cave.

They went to the cistern, Benaiah and the men sent by Solomon, and they looked into it. It was

a great cistern, but Sokar had nearly emptied it of the water it held. When they went back again to their camp in the high grasses they made up a plan by which Sokar, the Servitor of the Lord of Earth, might be taken.

They dug beneath the cistern and they drained off the water that was in it, and they turned away from it the course of the water that came down from the snow of the mountain. They stopped up the hole they had made with a pack of wool. And then they filled up the cistern with wine from their wine-skins, and they went back to their camp in the high grasses.

And Sokar came forth upon another day. He came forth holding in his hand for a staff the mid-bone of a dragon, and he went to the cistern he had made. But coming to it he smelled, not the clear smell of snow-water, but the smell of wine. Then Sokar, fearing that a trap had been set for him, went back to his cave. In a while he came forth again. Leaving the staff that was the mid-bone of a dragon against the cistern, he dipped in

his hand, and he drank the wine he had taken up in his hand. He dipped his joined hands in and raised them to his mouth. And then, until the sunset came, he stayed there drinking the wine that he lifted to his mouth with his joined hands. They heard his shouts of exultation as the wine went through his veins. He whirled in his hands the staff that was the mid-bone of a dragon. And then he lay down upon the earth, overcome with the wine he had drunken.

Then Benaiah, the giant captain, and his comrades, went to where Sokar was lying in his stupor. They put the heavy chains upon him, the chains that were inscribed with the magical names that King Solomon knew.

When he awakened from his stupor, Sokar, the Servitor of the Lord of Earth, found himself weighed down with chains. His strength that was the strength of a storm failed him, when he tried to break the chains. And when Benaiah laid against his bones a link that had a magic name inscribed upon it, he shouted out in pain and

terror. Benaiah made the Servitor of the Lord of Earth go with him towards the city of King Solomon. He raged, and sometimes in his rages he broke down trees and buildings with his kicks.

And as soon as Sokar was brought before King Solomon he uttered a cry so shrill that the earth quaked to it. But Solomon made him gaze upon his ring, and when he had gazed upon it, Sokar, the Servitor of the King of Earth, knew that Solomon would have to be obeyed.

Then Solomon sent him to fetch stones for the building of the Temple. This he did, fetching them down from a far mountain. It was then that an Angel of God made Solomon the King know that on the stones that were for the building of the Temple no tool of iron was to be used.

For iron was used in weapons that were for the killing of men, and for that reason iron might not be used in the making of the Temple that was as a sign of peace between God and mankind. But how, without the iron chisel and the iron sledge, might stones be cut so that they would fit together?

King Solomon brought his wise men together and he asked this question of them.

It was then that his wise men spoke to King Solomon, telling him of Samur. Samur, they told him, is a living substance of about the size of a barleycorn; laid upon stone or upon anything harder than stone, it cuts its way through. Solomon, since he might not use iron to shape the stones for his Temple, resolved to use the substance Samur.

And Samur, his wise men told him, was the possession of him who is called the Lord of Earth. When he heard this Solomon pondered in his heart. It might be, he thought, that the Servitor of the Lord of Earth who fetched the stones for the Temple would be able to tell him how he might obtain the substance that would shape the stones.

So once again Sokar was brought before King Solomon. And Solomon told the Servitor of the Lord of Earth that a term would be put to his labours, and that a day would come when he would

be set free, if he would tell how Samur might be obtained.

Then Sokar, that one day he might be free from the labour of carrying stones for the building of the Temple, told King Solomon how the substance Samur might be obtained. The Lord of Earth had entrusted Samur to a bird, to the Moorhen. She went upon the high mountains with it, laying the substance upon the rocks, so that they were split open, and seeds that the winds and the birds carried might grow in the openings. And the Moorhen had sworn to the Lord of Earth that she would never let men have Samur from her.

Again Solomon pondered and he thought upon a way by which the Moorhen might be forced to give the substance Samur to his men. He called upon Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, and he sent him upon this other quest, telling him how, to his mind, the Moorhen might be forced to let Samur pass into the possession of men.

Then Benaiah took a horse and rode up into

Solomon made him gaze upon his ring

the mountains. And, finding the nest of the Moorhen, he covered it all over with glass. The Moorhen came back to the nest. Her little ones raised their heads to her. She tried to feed them, but she could not bring food to their mouths on account of the cunning substance that men had made and that Benaiah had placed between her and her nest. She tried again and again, but she could not reach to her young ones who held up their mouths behind the sheet of glass. Then the Moorhen said to herself, "Am I not Naggar Tura, the mountain-carver? I will go and bring Samur to this substance that shuts off my young ones from me, and I will split it as I split the rocks of the mountain."

She hurried away, and Benaiah watched her nest. She returned and she laid something down upon the sheet of glass that covered the nest. Then Benaiah raised a great shout, and the Moorhen, frightened, fled. He ran to the nest and found a substance laid upon the glass that was cutting into the glass. This was Samur, the sub-

stance that was the size of a barleycorn and that cut through substances that iron could not cut through. Benaiah took it within the beak of one of the little Moorhens and brought it to King Solomon. And the Moorhen, despairing at having broken her oath to the Lord of Earth, slew herself at the bottom of the mountain.

So Samur was brought to King Solomon. And the stones that were fetched by Sokar were shaped by the cutting made by this substance, and no iron was used upon them. And then, as the Temple was all but finished, Solomon the King died.

He died within the Temple, and he died as he was overlooking the work that Sokar, the Servitor of the Lord of Earth, was doing. It was granted to Solomon that for a while Sokar would not know that he was dead. He leaned upon his staff, and his staff supported him even though he was dead, and the ring with the bright stone in it still shone upon his finger. Sokar went on working, not knowing that he who commanded him was no longer in life. Furiously and still more furiously he worked, raising greater and greater stones.

And then, on the fourth day, the ants, who are also the servants of the Lord of Earth, came upon the floor of the Temple, and climbed upon the staff that held dead Solomon upright, and ate into the staff; it became hollow and broke, and the dead King fell stiffly upon the floor of the Temple.

Now at this time the Temple was all but built, and only a few stones remained to be put upon it. Sokar, seeking the King prone upon the ground, let fall the stone he was carrying. He rushed out of the Temple. He shouted as he went through Solomon's city, making his way back to his cavern in the earth. And the people of Solomon's city hid themselves as they heard the noise of his shouting that was like the noise of the storm. As he went on he kicked over great trees and high buildings with his feet. In one of his rages he came before the little house of a poor widow. She begged of him that he would not destroy her house, but Sokar, laughing, kicked it over. Then he fell and broke his leg. He won back to his cavern. But ever since that time Sokar goes limping, with two sticks in his hands to help him along.

The third shoe was made; it was laid upon the ground and the air blew upon it, hardening it with invisible strokes. Then the King said, "There is another story to be told, and it should be a story that is different from the others, being one that can be told humorously as we look towards the blossoming tree yonder." The four brothers then looked anxiously one at the other, and then the one who was the eldest amongst them signed to the King and to the others to seat themselves so that they might look towards the blossoming tree. Then, resting against the anvil, he told them the story of:

SAINT MARTIN AND THE HONEST MAN

OU must know that there is a certain day in the year on which the saints may leave the courts of heaven and come down upon earth for the space between daylight and dark. That day we call All Saints' Day. Then Saint Peter opens the gate, and the saints who would have their day upon earth come down.

Only a few ever come. These few are the best and the greatest of the saints. And of the few who come amongst us again I can tell you of only one—Saint Martin. I am told that never once has Saint Martin missed coming down to earth upon All Saints' Day.

And what does Saint Martin do between daylight and dark when he comes down upon earth

upon All Saints' Day? I will tell you. He goes up and down the country that he went up and down when he was upon the earth. He goes up and down upon it seeking for an honest man.

In the shape of a great white horse with wings he goes up and down the country he knew when he was on earth before. For you must know that the saints when they come down upon earth on All Saints' Day do not have the forms they had when they were on earth before. Oh, no! Each comes down in the form of the bird or beast that they were with most when they were upon the earth as men. And Saint Martin, because he was a high officer and rode a horse, takes the shape of a horse upon All Saints' Day—a white horse with great wings.

So up and down the land, in the shape of a white horse with wings, Saint Martin goes between daylight and dark upon All Saints' Day. And when he comes upon an honest man, he gallops around and around him, persuading him to mount upon his back. And when the man mounts upon his

back, Saint Martin carries him off to the place where honest men, honestly enjoying themselves, are doing the work that their hearts are set upon doing.

There was once a goatherd who lived near the place that Saint Martin had lived in. He was once given a very good riding-boot that the King himself had worn. He hadn't been given the other boot. The King had ordered the riding-boots to be given him one day when he had stopped at the goatherd's hut. But then he remembered that there was good leather in the sides of the left boot, and he ordered that it be sent to the cordwainer's, so that when his slippers needed repair there would be good leather to repair them with. So the left boot was taken to the cordwainer's and the goatherd was given the right boot only. It was a good boot and only slightly worn, and it would have lasted the goatherd many years—that is, if he had had the left boot to go with it.

The King faced the creature and fought with it

(*See page* 71)

He took it into his hut and he left it on a shelf above where he lay at night. It was a welcome sight to him in the mornings when he wakened up, that boot standing there so fine and so stately, as if it were waiting for him to put it on. And the goatherd lived hoping that some time he might come by another boot that would go with it. Then he would have a pair of boots for his feet, and then he would be able to go about in as much style and comfort as any man in the King's dominions.

One day, passing by the cordwainer's and looking sharply out as he always did when he went that way, he found the King's left riding-boot. He picked it up out of the nettles, and, a happy man, he went into his hut and put the left boot beside the right boot upon the shelf. There was a real pair of boots for him to look at when he wakened up in the morning.

This left boot had a very good sole, but the sides of it had been taken out to put patches upon the King's slippers. He would get enough leather

some day, the goatherd hoped, to make sides for this boot. Then he would put the King's two riding-boots upon his feet, and he would go in as much style and comfort as any man in the King's dominions.

All that summer he used to sit near the shoemaker's bench while the goats were in the fenced field, and watch him while he cut out the leather and stitched the sides into the boots. He came to know how to do this job just as well as the shoemaker. He had a knife for cutting the leather, an awl for making the holes, a needle and waxed thread for stitching; he had even a cobbler's ball for rubbing on the leather when it was stitched in. But, the poor goatherd!—he could never get a piece of leather that would make sides for the King's riding-boot.

He knew that he would come by so much leather some day, and he lived on in hope, while he had the comfort of seeing the two high boots on the shelf every morning when he wakened up. These two boots he knew would one day go upon his feet

that never had had boots upon them before; then, with the King's boots upon his feet, he would go about in as much style and comfort as any man in the King's dominions.

Summer passed, and the days before All Saints' Day began. Now the goatherd had two very good pieces of leather. They were given him by a man whose goats he had saved from the flooding river. He was ready now to put sides into the boot that wanted sides. But, the poor goatherd!—he couldn't get any work for himself done now, night or day.

For it was about this time that the King, by the help of a good law that he himself made, had the Ancient Tribe shifted from the place they always had had by the edge of the forest. "It will be a good place for my goats to graze," said the King, and thereupon he had orders sent to the goatherd to take his two hundred goats to the edge of the forest. The goatherd used to take them there every day. He used to bring the leather, and the knife, and the awl, and the needle and

the waxed thread, and the King's boot with him, always hoping that he would have an hour or two to cut out and put in the leather; but so it was not to be. The goats were always striving to get off that grazing ground and into places where they should not go, and the goatherd spent all his time keeping them where they should be. And when he would get back to his own hut at night, the light would be gone, and he had no way of making a light to cut or to stitch by.

Now I must tell you about the King. His family was known as "The Dynasty of the Honest Crown," for there was no one in that family, it was thought, but was an honest man. A long time before, one of the King's forefathers had been carried off by Saint Martin, and ever since that theirs was spoken of as "The Honest Crown." And on All Saints' Day every year the King would go walking the roads of his kingdom expecting that he would meet and be carried off by the white horse that was Saint Martin.

All Saints' Day came round again. The King

went walking the roads of his kingdom in the expectation that Saint Martin would meet him and carry him off on his back. And as soon as the light came into the sky the goatherd rose up, and took his breakfast of whey and curds, got together the two hundred goats, and started off for the edge of the forest. He didn't forget to take with him the leather and the awl, the needle and the waxed thread, and even the cobbler's ball. And the King's boot was where it always was when he went out in the morning—hanging from around his neck. As he went out of his door he took his cap off to the rising sun and he said, "Glory and thanks to the day, and to God who has given me this day and the sense to use it." And then he shouted to the goats and drove them off.

He drove the goats in amongst the rocks and he kept them there till the King went by. The King, as always upon that day, was walking by himself, and the goatherd gave him the salutation that was always given him upon that day, "Good morrow, honest man." The King saluted him and

went by, and then the goatherd took the road again, driving the two hundred goats before him.

He heard the sound of galloping behind him, and before he had time to look round him a white horse came up with him. It galloped around and around him. It had wings upon its back. The horse drove the goats on, and put them into a cave, and then it came back and galloped around the goatherd.

"Go on, go on, your reverence," said the goatherd. "Go on. The King is on the road before you."

But the great white horse with the wings would not go on. It kept galloping around and around the goatherd, persuading him to mount upon its back. And at last the goatherd said, "If I get up on your back, maybe then you will go on to where the King is walking."

So up on the horse's back the goatherd got, and as soon as he was up, the horse spread out its wings and went up and up. High in the air went the goatherd upon the winged horse. Up and up they

went, above the cave where the goats were, above the road where the King walked, above the forest along the edge of which the goats used to graze. Up and up they went, the goatherd upon the winged horse. Many's the story told of a man in the air, but there's none of them as strange as that of the goatherd upon the winged horse.

They went above where the King was walking, but although he was to be seen upon the road, the winged horse did not go down to take him up on its back. It took the goatherd at last to the place where the honest men were honestly enjoying themselves, each man doing the work that his heart was set upon doing. And there, with the rest of the honest men, the goatherd sat and ate what there was there to be eaten, and drank what there was there to be drunk, and set to and did what the rest of them were doing—the work that his heart was set upon.

He took the leather and cut it and shaped it; he took the awl and made holes for the needle to go through; he took the needle and the waxed thread

and stitched the sides into the boot. He pared away the leather and he rubbed it with the cobbler's ball, making it all fine. And when the work was done the winged horse came before him again, and took him down to the cave where the two hundred goats were. Then the white horse galloped away. The goatherd drove the goats to the edge of the forest, and there was still time for them to graze to their hearts' content.

And in the morning when he wakened up, the goatherd looked to the shelf, and there before his eyes were the two high boots that were his very own. They were the finest sight the goatherd had ever looked on. He rose up and he put them on his two feet, and every minute in the day he looked down on them, saying to himself, "I have as much style and comfort now as any man in the King's dominions! Praise to God and Saint Martin for it!"

"Go on, go on, your reverence," said the goatherd.

"The last story!" the King said. The piece of special iron was put into the fire; but the apprentice-smith who blew the fire with the bellows was not to be found. One of the brothers came forward; he took up the bellows and he blew upon the fire, and then, as the Air stirred up the Fire, he began to tell the second story that had to do with the Air:

BELLEROPHON

FTEN he watched the eagle in the air; as his gaze followed it on its way he would shout out his own name, "Bellerophon, Bellerophon!" As his name came back to him from the high rocks it seemed to him to be a prophecy of the time when he, too, would mount up and go the way of the eagle. He owned a bright sword and he knew that his spirit was braver and stronger than the spirits of those who were around him. And yet he had to serve a grudging King, and fresh labours and harassments came to him every day.

Once as he came back from his labour, the eyes of King Proetus's Queen rested upon the bright youth. "How beautiful he is, this Bellerophon," the Queen said. She spoke to him and would have

him speak to her. But Bellerophon turned from Proetus's Queen—Proetus whom he had to serve. Then the Queen went to King Proetus, and, falsely accusing Bellerophon, had him sent away. But she had him sent away from slavery into dangers. He was commanded to go to the King of Lykia, and he went bearing tablets that told that King to thrust him into danger and still more danger.

"Thou must slay the Chimaera for me," said the King of Lykia; "thou must slay the Chimaera that appears in the sky and affrights all of us." Even then the Chimaera appeared in the sky. It had the head of a lion, the body of a goat, and the tail of a dragon. It filled the bright sky with horror and darkness. Then Bellerophon vowed that he would slay the monster; he would slay it, not because the King commanded him to slay it, but because the monster filled the beautiful depths that he loved with blackness. "I will slay the Chimaera for thee, O King," Bellerophon said, and he laid his hand on his bright sword as he

spoke, "I will slay the Chimaera, and I will bring its lion's head into thy hall."

But how would he come to the Chimaera that went through the bright spaces of the sky? It came upon the tops of high mountains, and there Bellerophon would come upon it and slay it. But even as he sharpened his bright sword to go to the mountains and seek the Chimaera there, a whisper came to Bellerophon and told him that he should mount up to slay the Chimaera. And the whisper told him of a horse that grazed on far pastures, the horse Pegasus that had wings. And if he could come upon Pegasus and bridle him and mount him he could slay with his bright sword the Chimaera in the sky.

Then Bellerophon went forth bearing his sword and carrying the bridle that would hold Pegasus, the winged horse. He went forth, and in his own wild pastures he came upon Pegasus. The youth saw the winged horse feeding upon lotuses and springing across the water-courses. White was Pegasus, with white wings and dainty hoofs, and

He cut the lion-head off the monster that lay there

a heavy mane that tossed as he bounded along. It was easy to see that no bridle had ever gone upon Pegasus.

All day Bellerophon, the strong youth, followed after Pegasus. The horse bounded away, hardly noticing his pursuer. On the second day Bellerophon came suddenly upon Pegasus. He was drinking at a certain spring. Bellerophon seized the winged horse by the mane, and strove to hold him. But Pegasus trampled and kicked and at last broke away from Bellerophon. Afterwards he saw the winged horse only in the air, or drinking with his head raised from the spring every moment.

Often when he was worn out with watching and the chase, it would seem to Bellerophon that he never would be able to capture the horse Pegasus; he never would be able to slay the Chimaera, and he would have to go back and bear whatever doom the King of Lykia would lay upon him. And then he would see the sky being filled with the blackness and horror of the Chimaera, and he would

resolve once more that he would be the one who would slay the monster.

One night a dream came to him. The goddess Pallas Athene appeared in his dream, and she said to him that any mortal who had such resolve as he had and who strove as he strove to carry out his resolve would have help from the immortals. She whispered to him of a philtre that would tame the horse Pegasus. Then he awoke, and he found in the hollow of his shield a cup that had a liquid in it—a liquid that was red like burning iron.

Bellerophon waited, hidden, at the spring that Pegasus came to. He seized the horse by the mane, and he poured into his mouth and between his teeth the liquid that he had found. Then Pegasus became tame under his hand. He put the bridle upon him. With the bright sword in his hand he mounted up to slay the Chimaera that even then filled the sky with blackness and horror.

And now he was in the air at last. As he went

above the earth he shouted out his name, "Bellerophon, Bellerophon!" He knew now how magnificent that name was—the name for the rider of the skies, the conqueror of the Chimaera. He rose above where the eagle flew. He looked down and saw the fields and houses and towns of men. He would always soar above them, Bellerophon thought.

He saw the Chimaera near him, the monster that had the head of a lion, the body of a goat, and the tail of a dragon. Pegasus screamed, and would have kept back from the monster. But Bellerophon rode to meet the darkening thing. It breathed out fire that scorched him. But Bellerophon fought with it, using his bright sword. At last he struck into its body and brought the Chimaera from the sky down to the ground.

He rode Pegasus beside where it lay. He sprang off and cut the lion-head off the monster that lay there. Then Pegasus, screaming because the monster's blood had come upon him, reddening his white sides, fled away. Bellerophon, as

he saw the winged horse go, knew that he could never recapture him, and knew that he could never again soar above the fields and the houses and the towns of men.

Into the hall of the King of Lykia he went, bringing the lion-head of the Chimaera. And then, because he saw an eagle soaring in the blue of the air, he wept. Before him, as he knew, there were long and weary wanderings over the face of the earth. He wept, knowing what was gone from him and what was before him. And then he rejoiced, for he knew that the pure spaces over him would never again be filled with the blackness and horror of the Chimaera.

THE HORSE

THE King who had turned blacksmith now made ready to put the fourth shoe on the horse's hoof—the shoe that he had shaped out of the hilt of his own sword. He seared the hoof with the burning iron, and he said to the four brothers, "I know this horse that you have brought to me—by many tokens I know this horse."

He put his hands into the long, thick mane of the horse, and standing in that way he spoke to the brothers: "Wild this horse has been, but before you tamed it there was one who had been mounted on it. I have been on this horse's back, and have gone dangerous ways thereon."

He motioned to the four brothers to seat themselves, and when they had done so, he said, "Al-

though I am of royal blood I have been a merchant, and, some years ago, I went with a band of merchants through lands that are east of this. And one day, as we went on, we saw a castle with banners upon it, and the banners looked so inviting that we went to the castle. When we entered the courtyard we were received by women who welcomed us with smiles and sweetly spoken words.

"There were none but women in the place, and there was a Queen over the women. They entertained us most pleasantly, making a feast for us. The Queen herself entertained me, and the rest of the women entertained the others of my band, and we walked through the gardens of the castle, and we laughed, and never before in our lives had I or the men who were with me been so gay.

"But as I walked in the garden, with my friends and their companions, I saw something that brought memories into my mind—memories of something that I had once heard. I saw an iron house standing there with the red light of the sun-

set upon it. And then I remembered that one had come to my father's house in the days when I was a child, and had told us about the Amazons, about the women who, without men, rule a wide country. They had a castle, the man who told that story said, and they draw men into that castle, and after they have entertained them they put them into an iron house, making prisoners of them; these prisoners they send into distant countries, exchanging them for the women of their bands who have been taken captives in the wars which they, the Amazons, are constantly waging.

"None of my friends knew of this, the story that had come back into my memory. I was not able to speak to them and tell them of it, for the women kept us one from the other. I looked around and I saw the women guards about the castle, each with a bow in her hand and arrows ready to shoot at us. And I saw some of the women struggling with a young horse that had just been taken from a herd of wild horses; they had forced a bit into its mouth, and they were

striving to make it obey the rein. I went towards where the horse was; before they knew what I was about to do I sprang upon its back, and seized the rein and urged it away. And I had got far away before the guards shot their arrows at me."

He lifted up the hoof of the horse and fitted the iron to its hoof, and made ready to drive the nails in. "This is the horse," he said, "that I rode on away from the castle of the Amazons. All night I rode on, and all next day. My way was across a plain, and I knew not in what direction I should go. In the day-time I came back on the very tracks I had made in my flight in the night. At sunset I came before the castle of the Amazons. And a band of them, mounted upon horses, came down upon me. Their charge threw me off the horse. They took me and brought me before the Queen. As I went I looked towards the iron house; again I saw it in the sunset, and it seemed to me that I heard the groans of my companions coming from within it.

"The Queen did not have me shot to death with

arrows, either because she did not want to have me die before her face, or because the Amazons would have my punishment made very great. She had me bound to the back of the horse that I had tried to escape on, and they loosed the horse once more.

"I have reason to know this horse and the way it gallops up hill and down hill, and across the plains, and through the forests. The horse with myself bound upon it dashed on—it might be that it was seeking the herd it had been taken from. All night I journeyed on, my face turned to the stars; there were aches in every joint of my body. Then day came, and the sun blistered me. Hunger and thirst and dizziness came to me as the horse went on. I would awaken as it stopped to graze, and I would faint again when it would race away. Great horse-flies came and stung me. The last of my journey that I remember was through a forest. A branch crashed across my head, and after that I remembered nothing more."

He drove the nails in, fastening the last shoe on the horse's hoof. "The horse brought me good

fortune," he said, giving the rein into the hand of the eldest brother. "Go your ways with it, and may it bring you good fortune also. It brought me into the country that I now rule over. Men found me and they loosed me off the horse, letting it go free. The men who found me treated me with honour. Their King had died, and they treated me as one miraculously sent to them to be their King. I was near to death on account of my suffering, but they ministered to me, and I became sound again. Only this remains upon me as a token of my flight from the castle of the Amazons." He lifted up his arm and he showed a mark upon it; it showed where the leathern thong that had bound him to the horse had cut into his flesh. "May the horse bring you as good fortune as it has brought to me," he said.

They thanked the Royal Blacksmith who had shod the horse for them, and praying that it might bring them good fortune the four brothers left the Forge in the Forest.

I KNOW A SHOE-
MAKER WHO
MAKES SHOES
WITHOUT LEATHER
OUT OF THE FOUR ELE-
MENTS, FIRE, WATER,
EARTH AND AIR AND
EVERY CUSTOMER
GETS TWO PAIR

THE FORGE IN THE FOREST

Blacksmith, blacksmith, by the cross,
The great craft is thine!
You can make the black iron flower
On your anvil.

You'll not woo the flowers to stay,
Daisy, rose;
You will have them edged with gold,
Ruddy, glowing—
Then you'll toss the flowers away.

Who waits on your ringing blows?
'Tis the delver.
And the spade for him is shaped—
Spade to make the ridges rise
Where the grass was.

Who waits on your trusty blows?
'Tis the soldier.
Edged and fine you make a sword
He may trust to.

Who waits on your manly blows?
'Tis the woodman.
Weighty, keen, you shape the broad axe
That the forest falls before.

THE FORGE IN THE FOREST

Who waits on your hearty blows?
'Tis the ploughman.
And you make for him the coulter
That the land breaks.

Who waits on your ready blows?
'Tis the horseman.
And you make him shoes of iron,
And the bridle for the mastery
Of the steed.

Blacksmith, blacksmith by the cross,
The great craft is thine!
Spade and sword and coulter, too,
Axe and bridle and horseshoe—
All that gives to man the mastery
On your anvil is
Shaped by you!